

## Summa Theologica III q27. Of the Sanctification of the Blessed Virgin

1. Whether the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, was sanctified before her birth from the womb?
2. Whether she was sanctified before animation?  
[Intervening Article. Whether innocence is a more outstanding benefit from God than repentance?]
3. Whether in virtue of this sanctification the fomes of sin was entirely taken away from her?
4. Whether the result of this sanctification was that she never sinned?
5. Whether in virtue of this sanctification she received the fullness of grace?
6. Whether it was proper to her to be thus sanctified?

[From the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas as translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, and from the works of Blessed John Duns Scotus as selected and arranged by Jerome of Montefortino and as translated by Peter L.P. Simpson. Texts are taken from the *Opus Oxoniense* and the *Reportata Parisiensia* of the Wadding edition of Scotus' works.]

### Article 1. Whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her birth from the womb?

*Aquinas*

Objection 1: It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb. For the Apostle says (*I Cor.* 15:46): "That was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual." But by sanctifying grace man is born spiritually into a son of God according to *Jn.* 1:13: "(who) are born of God." But birth from the womb is a natural birth. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

Objection 2: Further, Augustine says (*Ep. ad Dardan.*): "The sanctification, by which we become temples of God, is only of those who are born again." But no one is born again, who was not born previously. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

*Scotus* [*Oxon.* 3 d 3 q.1; *Report. ib.*]

Objection 1. It seems that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before birth from the womb. For if so [*Oxon.* 3 d 3 q.1 n.3), she would have been sanctified before she was born; therefore she would have been cleansed from original sin through sanctifying grace (for at any rate she could then have had original sin); therefore if she had died before the passion of her Son, she would have entered the gates of paradise: but this seems unacceptable, that she the redeemed should enter thither first before the Redeemer; therefore she was not sanctified before birth from the womb.

Objection 2. [*Oxon. ib.*] The Blessed Virgin came into the world according to the common way of propagating; therefore in her was the same infection, wherever it finally comes from, as is in the other sons of Adam propagated in the common way;

Objection 3: Further, whoever is sanctified by grace is cleansed from sin, both original and actual. If, therefore, the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her birth from the womb, it follows that she was then cleansed from original sin. Now nothing but original sin could hinder her from entering the heavenly kingdom. If therefore she had died then, it seems that she would have entered the gates of heaven. But this was not possible before the Passion of Christ, according to the Apostle (*Heb.* 10:19): “We have [Vulg.: ‘having’] therefore a confidence in the entering into the Holies by His blood.” It seems therefore that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

Objection 4: Further, original sin is contracted through the origin, just as actual sin is contracted through an act. But as long as one is in the act of sinning, one cannot be cleansed from actual sin. Therefore neither could the Blessed Virgin be cleansed from original sin as long as she was in the act of origin, by existence in her mother’s womb.

On the contrary, The Church celebrates the feast of our Lady’s Nativity. Now the Church does not celebrate feasts except of those who are holy. Therefore even in her birth the Blessed Virgin was holy. Therefore she was sanctified in the womb.

I answer that, Nothing is handed down in the canonical Scriptures concerning the sanctification of the Blessed Mary as to her being sanctified in the womb; indeed, they do not even mention her birth. But as Augustine, in his tractate on the Assumption of the Virgin, argues with reason, since her body was assumed into heaven, and yet Scripture does not relate this; so it may be reasonably argued that she was sanctified in the womb. For it is

therefore just as the rest of men are born with offense of original guilt, by parity the Blessed Virgin too came into the world as other men do. And [*Oxon. ib.* n.1] Fulgentius expressly says this in *De Fide ad Petrum*, ch.23: “Hold most firmly and do not in any way doubt that all men who are conceived through the lying together of man and woman are born with original sin;” therefore she was not sanctified before birth from the womb.

Objection 3. [*Oxon.* 4 d.4 q.3 n.1]. According to the Apostle (*1 Cor.* ch. 15): “Not what is spiritual is first but what is animal, then what is spiritual;” therefore it is necessary for everyone to be born carnally first before being reborn spiritually; therefore the Blessed Virgin could not be sanctified before birth from the womb.

On the contrary, [*Oxon. Prol.* q.2 n.8] the authority of the Catholic Church is so great that Augustine says, *Epistolam fundamenti*: “I would not believe the Gospel unless I believed the Catholic Church.” But this Church celebrates the birth of the Blessed Virgin; therefore it was necessary for her to have been holy before she was born. Again, [*Oxon.* 4 d.4 q.3 n.2] John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb of his mother, *Luke* ch.1, therefore more so the Mother of God and Queen of all the Saints.

I answer that, it must be said that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before birth from the womb. The authority of the Church is altogether convincing on this; and that it involves no repugnance is made clear: for, [*Oxon.* 3 d 3 q.1 n.9] as far as Divine acceptation is concerned, grace is equivalent to original justice; so much so that original sin is not imputed to one who has grace, as is clear in Baptism or in Circumcision. In whatever instant,

reasonable to believe that she, who brought forth “the Only-Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth,” received greater privileges of grace than all others: hence we read (*Lk.* 1:28) that the angel addressed her in the words: “Hail full of grace!”

Moreover, it is to be observed that it was granted, by way of privilege, to others, to be sanctified in the womb; for instance, to Jeremias, to whom it was said (*Jer.* 1:5): “Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee”; and again, to John the Baptist, of whom it is written (*Lk.* 1:15): “He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb.” It is therefore with reason that we believe the Blessed Virgin to have been sanctified before her birth from the womb.

Reply to Objection 1: Even in the Blessed Virgin, first was that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual: for she was first conceived in the flesh, and afterwards sanctified in the spirit.

Reply to Objection 2: Augustine speaks according to the common law, by reason of which no one is regenerated by the sacraments, save those who are previously born. But God did not so limit His power to the law of the sacraments, but that He can bestow His grace, by special privilege, on some before they are born from the womb.

Reply to Objection 3: The Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb from original sin, as to the personal stain; but she was not freed from the guilt to which the whole nature is subject, so as to enter into Paradise otherwise than through the Sacrifice of Christ; the same also is to be said of the Holy Fathers who lived before Christ.

Reply to Objection 4: Original sin is

therefore, that that soul was in the womb of her mother, God could have given her equal or greater grace than was to be given in Baptism; therefore she would then have been sanctified. And also, in the first instant of her being, when original sin ought to have been present, if God had then given sanctifying grace, the stain of original sin would have been prevented. And if that stain is thought to be contracted and to overflow into the soul from infected flesh, God could equally have cleansed the flesh itself and afterwards have infused the soul. And if that soul had been for a single instant under original guilt, it is in no way unacceptable to understand that it was cleansed immediately after that instant; for if a natural agent [*Oxon. ib.* n.10] can begin to act in an instant, in such a way that in that instant there was a subject in a state of rest under the contrary property and in the immediately following time, supposing it was under the property of being cold, it was, through the action of the agent, under the property of being hot, much more could that come about through a supernatural agent. For in whatever instant a natural agent acts God can act; therefore in the time immediately following upon the instant in which the soul of the Blessed Virgin was under original guilt, he could infuse grace into it and destroy original guilt. But if she had been under guilt for some time, God could also, before she was born, bestow grace upon her, as he does with those already born and who receive the sacrament of Baptism.

Reply to Objection 1. I deny that the Blessed Virgin, just from the fact that she was sanctified and cleansed from original sin before she was born, would have been going to enjoy heavenly glory if she had died before her Son; for [*Oxon. ib.* n.19] the Holy Fathers who had died before the death of Christ were found in limbo, even

transmitted through the origin, inasmuch as through the origin the human nature is transmitted, and original sin, properly speaking, affects the nature. And this takes place when the off-spring conceived is animated. Wherefore nothing hinders the offspring conceived from being sanctified after animation: for after this it remains in the mother's womb not for the purpose of receiving human nature, but for a certain perfecting of that which it has already received.

though some of them had already been cleansed from original sin before they were born. Therefore the gate of heaven was closed before payment of satisfaction for the guilt of Adam; for God had declared that he was going indeed to remit original guilt, because of the passion of his Son foreseen, to everyone who believes and will believe in him, but not that he was going to remit the punishment due to that sin, namely the lack of the Divine vision, because of the passion as foreseen, but because of it as displayed and represented.

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Therefore just as the gate was not open to the Fathers who died before the passion of Christ, so, it seems, should it be said of the Blessed Virgin, if she had parted from this life before her Son.

Reply to Objection 2. I say that from the fact that the Blessed Virgin was born according to the common way of propagation nothing else follows except that in fact she had the reason and cause in herself, as being a daughter of Adam, of contracting original sin. Besides, [*Report.* 4 d.4 q.3 n.7] we cannot thence infer that she could in no way have been sanctified in the womb; not only because she could have been prevented by God in such a way that she was under that very original sin for no instant, as will be clear in the following article, but also, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.6 n.11ff.] because just as someone after Baptism is a son of Adam and yet does not have original guilt, so before baptism, or in the womb, he could receive the same or greater grace from God, whereby original guilt might be destroyed, although in the meantime he be propagated, as a son of Adam, by the common law.

Reply to Objection 3. I reply that the saying of the Apostle is to be understood of those who are justified according to the common and universal law prescribed by Divine wisdom, according to which, in the Christian law, they are justified by the reception of Baptism, and, in the Mosaic law, the Israelites were justified through Circumcision; but that was not a reason that some could not have been, by a special privilege of God, justified before they were born from the womb of their mother, as [*Oxon.* 4 d.4 q.3 n.2] is said of Jeremiah (*Jeremiah* 1), and of John the Baptist (*Luke* 1), and as the Church firmly holds of the Most Blessed Mother of Christ, all of whom were first carnally conceived and later on, in nature or in time, justified in their maternal womb.

## Article 2. Whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before animation?

*Aquinas*

*Scotus* [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1; *Report.* *ib.*]

Objection 1: It would seem that the Blessed

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Virgin was sanctified before animation. Because, as we have stated (Article. 1), more grace was bestowed on the Virgin Mother of God than on any saint. Now it seems to have been granted to some, to be sanctified before animation. For it is written (*Jer.* 1:5): “Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee”: and the soul is not infused before the formation of the body. Likewise Ambrose says of John the Baptist (*Comment. in Luc.* i, 15): “As yet the spirit of life was not in him and already he possessed the Spirit of grace.” Much more therefore could the Blessed Virgin be sanctified before animation.

Objection 2: Further, as Anselm says (*De Concep. Virg.* xviii), “it was fitting that this Virgin should shine with such a purity that under God none greater can be imagined”: wherefore it is written (*Canticles* 4:7): “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.” But the purity of the Blessed Virgin would have been greater, if she had never been stained by the contagion of original sin. Therefore it was granted to her to be sanctified before her flesh was animated.

Objection 3: Further, as it has been stated above, no feast is celebrated except of some saint. But some keep the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore it seems that in her very Conception she was holy; and hence that she was sanctified before animation.

Objection 4: Further, the Apostle says (*Rm.* 11:16): “If the root be holy, so are the branches.” Now the root of the children is their parents. Therefore the Blessed Virgin could be sanctified even in her parents, before animation.

On the contrary, The things of the Old

Virgin was not sanctified until after original sin had been contracted. For [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.3] Christ was the universal redeemer of everyone and opened the door to everyone: but if the Blessed Virgin had not contracted original sin, Christ would not have been her Redeemer, because she would not have needed him; therefore we cannot and we should not attribute original innocence to his Mother because this would derogate from her Son himself.

Objection 2. [*Oxon. ib.*] The Blessed Virgin had the penalties common to human nature as propagated from Adam, namely hunger, thirst, and other such things; but she herself did not voluntarily assume these punishments, as they were voluntarily assumed by Christ for the satisfaction of our sins; because the Blessed Virgin was not our redeemer or repairer; therefore they were inflicted on her by God; and not inflicted unjustly; therefore they were inflicted, as in the case of other human beings, because of original sin.

Objection 3. If the Blessed Virgin had not been guilty of original sin, God would have bestowed a greater benefit on those whom he did liberate from that guilt than he did on his Mother: but that does not seem likely; therefore it is not to be said that she did not fall in Adam. *Proof of the minor:* [*Oxon.* 4 d.22 n.16] from *Luke* 7, where it is held that Christ inquired of Simon about the two debtors, to one of whom the creditor had forgiven more and to the other less, which of them would love the creditor more; and he replied, “I suppose it was he to whom he gave more,” and that judgment was approved by the Savior; therefore those liberated from sin already contracted would be more bound to God, because he had forgiven them more, than the Mother of Christ, to whom he had forgiven less;

Testament were figures of the New, according to *1 Cor.* 10:11: “All things happened to them in figure.” Now the sanctification of the tabernacle, of which it is written (*Ps.* 45:5): “The most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle,” seems to signify the sanctification of the Mother of God, who is called “God’s Tabernacle,” according to *Ps.* 18:6: “He hath set His tabernacle in the sun.” But of the tabernacle it is written (*Ex.* 40:31,32): “After all things were perfected, the cloud covered the tabernacle of the testimony, and the glory of the Lord filled it.” Therefore also the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified until after all in her was perfected, viz. her body and soul.

I answer that, The sanctification of the Blessed Virgin cannot be understood as having taken place before animation, for two reasons. First, because the sanctification of which we are speaking is nothing but the cleansing from original sin: for sanctification is a “perfect cleansing,” as Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* xii). Now sin cannot be taken away except by grace, the subject of which is the rational creature alone. Therefore before the infusion of the rational soul, the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified.

Secondly, because, since the rational creature alone can be the subject of sin; before the infusion of the rational soul, the offspring conceived is not liable to sin. And thus, in whatever manner the Blessed Virgin would have been sanctified before animation, she could never have incurred the stain of original sin: and thus she would not have needed redemption and salvation which is by Christ, of whom it is written (*Mt.* 1:21): “He shall save His people from their sins.” But this is unfitting, through implying that Christ is not the “Savior of all men,” as He is called (*1 Tim.* 4:10). It

therefore it is to be supposed that she had contracted original guilt.

On the contrary, [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.2] Anselm says (*De Conceptione Virg.*, ch.18), “It was fitting that the Virgin should shine with that purity than which a greater under God cannot be conceived:” but if she had once been under original sin, we could rightly conceive a greater purity; therefore the Blessed Virgin was most pure and immune altogether from every sin.

I answer that, it must be said that although the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her animation, because the flesh, as it is not the subject of sin, so neither is it of sanctifying grace, she was nevertheless sanctified in her very animation, that is to say, in the same moment in which it was necessary, from the common law of the sons of Adam, that guilt be in her, such that there never was, nor did she contract, original sin. The very excellence of her Son, for the purpose of not derogating from which some hold the opposite opinion, is what shows this. For [*Oxon. ib.* n.4] it was fitting for the most perfect Mediator, such as Christ the Lord was, to have had the most perfect act of mediating with respect to some person of whom he was Mediator: but he is not conceived to have existed as the most perfect Mediator of God and of his Mother unless he had preserved her from falling into original guilt; therefore she was preserved from being infected with original guilt. *The minor is shown:* [*Oxon. ib.*] first by comparison to God to whom he reconciles: second by comparison to the evil from which he liberates: third by comparison to the person for whom he reconciles. And *the first* in this way, by supposing that it was not impossible for original guilt to be prevented from being present, since it is not guilt, except contracted from another; and if that was

remains, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified after animation.

Reply to Objection 1: The Lord says that He “knew” Jeremias before he was formed in the womb, by knowledge, that is to say, of predestination: but He says that He “sanctified” him, not before formation, but before he “came forth out of the womb,” etc.

As to what Ambrose says, viz. that in John the Baptist there was not the spirit of life when there was already the Spirit of grace, by spirit of life we are not to understand the life-giving soul, but the air which we breathe out [respiratus]. Or it may be said that in him as yet there was not the spirit of life, that is the soul, as to its manifest and complete operations.

Reply to Objection 2: If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Saviour of all. Consequently after Christ, who, as the universal Saviour of all, needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place. For Christ did not contract original sin in any way whatever, but was holy in His very Conception, according to *Lk.* 1:35: “The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.” But the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth from the womb. This is what is signified (*Job* 3:9) where it is written of the night of original sin: “Let it expect light,” i.e. Christ, “and not see it”---(because “no defiled thing cometh into her,” as is written *Wis.* 7:25), “nor the rising of the dawning of the day,” that is of the Blessed Virgin, who in her birth was immune from original sin.

possible, for no one did it become the Mediator to have done it than for his Mother. Therefore *the argument is as follows*: [*Oxon.* n.5] a mediator is not conceived to mediate most perfectly, or to placate someone for an offense that had to be contracted, unless he prevents the offense from being present and prevents anyone from being offended by it; for if he placates someone already offended, and sways him to remit guilt, he does not exercise the most perfect act of mediating or placating, as he would have done by preventing the offense; therefore Christ does not most perfectly reconcile or placate the Trinity for the guilt to be contracted by the sons of Adam, if he does not prevent the Trinity from being offended, on account of the inherent guilt, in some one among them. Since therefore Christ was the most perfect Mediator, it is necessary that he have altogether prevented someone from contracting original guilt: but it was not fitting that this be any other besides his most blessed Mother. -- The argument under *the second head*: [*Oxon. ib.* n.6] because Christ seems to be more immediately our Repairer from original sin than from actual sin; for the necessity of the Incarnation is commonly assigned from original sin: but he was to that extent the most perfect Mediator with respect to his Mother that he preserved her from every actual sin; therefore also from original sin; especially since this original sin is a greater punishment than the lack of the Divine vision; for sin is the greatest of punishments for an intellectual nature; therefore Christ, as the most perfect Mediator, merited to take away this most heavy penalty from his Most Blessed Mother, otherwise he would not have reconciled most perfectly nor would he have been the most perfect Mediator. -- The argument finally *from the third*. [*Oxon. ib.* n.7] A person who has been

Reply to Objection 3: Although the Church of Rome does not celebrate the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, yet it tolerates the custom of certain churches that do keep that feast, wherefore this is not to be entirely reprobated. Nevertheless the celebration of this feast does not give us to understand that she was holy in her conception. But since it is not known when she was sanctified, the feast of her Sanctification, rather than the feast of her Conception, is kept on the day of her conception.

Reply to Objection 4: Sanctification is twofold. one is that of the whole nature: inasmuch as the whole human nature is freed from all corruption of sin and punishment. This will take place at the resurrection. The other is personal sanctification. This is not transmitted to the children begotten of the flesh: because it does not regard the flesh but the mind. Consequently, though the parents of the Blessed Virgin were cleansed from original sin, nevertheless she contracted original sin, since she was conceived by way of fleshly concupiscence and the intercourse of man and woman: for Augustine says (*De Nup. et Concup.* i): “All flesh born of carnal intercourse is sinful.”

reconciled is not supremely obliged to his mediator unless he has from him the whole of the good which he can receive: but preservation from contracting guilt can be had through a mediator; therefore no person was supremely beholden to Christ as Mediator if he did not preserve anyone from original sin. (The minor was touched on also in article 1, and will be declared more clearly in the following articles.)

Reply to Objection 1. I concede that Christ is the universal Mediator and Redeemer of everyone and even of his Most Blessed Mother, and consequently [*Report.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.8] that she needed the Redeemer more than anyone else whatever, and she needed him the more, indeed, the greater the good that was conferred on her by him; and since perfect innocence is a greater good by far than remission of guilt after an offense, a greater good was conferred on her by the Mediator when she was preserved from original sin than if she had been purged and cleansed afterwards; therefore [*Oxon.* 3 d 3 q.1 n.14] she needed to the greatest possible extent the Redeemer through whose merits grace prevented her from being infected with any spot of sin, just as others need the Mediator so that sin contracted might, through him, be remitted to them.

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Reply to Objection 2. About the penalties and sufferings of the Blessed Virgin I concede that she had them and that she bore them most powerfully, not because they existed as the consequences of original guilt contracted from the common way of propagation, as the argument proceeds; but rather [*Oxon. ib.* n.8] they were left to her so that she might win merit, whether for herself or for us; for there is nothing unacceptable if useless and inappropriate punishments, such as are sins, are taken from her by the Mediator, and useful ones, and those that would be of advantage, left to her.

Reply to Objection 3. Although [*Report.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.6] it is true that, of two debtors, he is more obligated to whom more is forgiven than he to whom less is; nevertheless, it is a benefit greater by far to be preserved from contracting any obligation of debt than for a debt already contracted to be forgiven; therefore, that person is bound by an absolutely



greater obligation who is preserved by the Mediator from original sin, than the person who is cleansed of what has already been contracted by the same Mediator, because the former has received a benefit more excellent by far than those who, after sin has been contracted, are freed by the grace of the Mediator. (But the intervening article, appropriately placed below after article 2, should be looked at.)

### **Scotus again on Article 2. Whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before animation?**

[*Oxon. 3 d.3 q.1; Report. ib.*]

Objection 1. It seems that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her animation but [*Oxon. 3 d.3 q.1 n.1*] after original sin had been contracted -- from what Augustine says (on the passage of *John ch. 2 Ecce Agnus Dei*), "He alone is innocent because he did not come thus," that is, not according to the common way of propagation; but it is established that the Blessed Virgin did come according to the common way of propagation; therefore she had her body propagated and formed from infected seed and, as a result, there was the same reason of infection in her soul from her body as in the souls of others propagated in like manner. And this also Pope Leo seems to say (*Sermon De Nativit. Domini*), "as he found none free of accusation, so he came for the freeing of all."

Objection 2. [*Report. 3 d.3 q.1 n.1*] Bernard (*Epist. 174*) says the same and proves it from this, that if she had not been conceived in original sin, then either she was cleansed before she was conceived, or at the moment of her conception; but not before, because before there was not present a nature able to be cleansed; nor at the same time, because then there was lust; and in this way she would be cleansed and not cleansed; therefore she was sanctified after original sin was contracted.

Objection 3. [*Oxon. 3 d.3 q.1 n.1*] Paul says (*Romans 5*), "In Adam all have sinned and need the grace of God." But this is only because in Adam everyone existed in reason's seed (*ratio seminalis*): but it is established that the Blessed Virgin was propagated in accordance with the same reason; therefore she was sanctified after original sin had been contracted.

Objection 4. I argue by reason; for she could not be sanctified in the first instant of her conception; therefore she existed cleansed from original blemish in the subsequent instants. *Proof of the assumption*: [*Oxon. ib. n.15*] the Blessed Virgin was naturally first the daughter of Adam; for it was necessary for her first to have been a person and thereafter to be filled with sanctifying grace: but in that prior instant, in which she was the daughter of Adam, it was binding on her to have the original justice which God had, in Adam, given to her and to everyone else propagated in the common way; therefore, for that prior instant, she contracted original guilt, and consequently she was sanctified after original sin had been contracted.

On the contrary, [*Report.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.1] Augustine says (*De Natura et Gratia*, ch. 36), “When there is discussion of sins, I wish, because of the honor of the Lord, to have no question at all about the Holy Virgin Mary.”

I answer that, the Most Blessed Virgin must be said to have been sanctified, not before her animation, but in the very instant of nature of her animation or of her conception, not from for the guilt which was present, but from the guilt which would have been present if grace, in that same instant, had not been infused into her. Nor does there appear to be any repugnance involved in this: for [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.9ff.], as was said in the preceding article, just as God could infuse the grace, by which original sin is destroyed, in subsequent instants, so he could do it also in any antecedent instant, and therefore also in the first, in which, that is to say, she was understood, on the part of her substance, to be in existence; and therefore since he has taught that he made the Mediator to be most perfect, we must attribute what is more honorific and more excellent to Mary: so [*Oxon.* 3 d 18 n.17] just as there is in the super-heavenly courts the humanity of Christ our Lord possessed, without any preceding merits, of supreme grace and glory, and just as there are many there who have never sinned with personal sin, and many who repented after their sins; so similarly there should be some person there who was not at any time guilty of any sin, whether actual or original, and that is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Reply to Objections. [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.14]. To the authorities which are adduced to the contrary, the response is this, that any son of Adam naturally owes the debt of original justice, and by the demerit of Adam he lacks it, and thus every such person has whence he contracts original sin: but if grace were to be given to someone in the first instant of the creation of the soul, although he would lack original justice, he does not however owe the debt of it, because, by the merit of another who prevents the sin, a grace is given to him that, as far as the Divine acceptance is concerned, is equivalent to that justice, nay exceeds it; therefore anyone whatever, as far as what is from himself, would possess original sin, unless another by meriting prevented it; therefore all those propagated from Adam are sinners because, in the manner that they have their nature from him, they have also whence they should lack the justice that is owed, unless it be conferred on them from elsewhere; and that is how are to be expounded all the authorities that could be adduced against the present solution. -- As to the reason that has been constructed from the first authority, and that rests on the last, although there was a response in article 1, I say again [*Oxon. ib.* n.8] that, insofar as it supposes or accepts that the blemish flows into the soul from the infected body, it is not the way of Anselm (*De Concept. Virg.* ch.1), as was said (Ia IIae q.81). But make the thing stand thus, that just as the infection of the flesh that nevertheless remains after Baptism would not be a necessary cause that original sin should remain in the soul; so could God, in the first moment of the conception of the Virgin, make it to be that her soul would not have a cause of infection, or could prevent her soul, through grace conferred on it, from also being infected by the body’s infection.

To the argument of Bernard [*Oxon. ib.* n.20] it can be replied, that in the instant of nature of her conception there was sanctification, not from guilt, which there was not, but from the guilt which would have been present if it had not been prevented by grace. -- And when it is argued that then there was lust, I say that the lust was in the conception and the

co-mixing of seeds, not in the conception of natures; and even had the creation of the soul been in the co-mixing of seeds, yet there is nothing unacceptable in God then having infused grace in the soul, because of which the soul did not contract any infection from the flesh sown with lust.

To the argument of Objection 4. I reply thus [*Report.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.10]: a subject can be compared to a form and to a privation, and it can be prior in nature to both; similarly a privation and form can be compared to that which receives them as to the measure by which each one of them is naturally fit to be present. In the first comparison this inference does not follow: grace is not present, therefore guilt is present; because in that prior instant of nature, in which the receiver is prior to the habit and to the privation, it is not its nature to have one or the other of them; therefore this alone can be inferred, that in the idea of nature, which is the foundation of filiation from Adam, justice is not included nor its privation, and this I concede. In the second comparison however, then certainly as to that measure, by which one or the other is naturally present, if the habit is not present, the privation really is. -- And *if you should argue*: [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.18] Mary is not just in the first instant of nature; therefore in that instant she is unjust, or is not just; -- *I say* that the consequence, when the predicates are compound, is false; for this inference does not follow: it is not a white piece of wood; therefore it is a non-white piece of wood; that is, it does not follow of itself (for then the thing could not be white). So here: she is not just in the first instant, that is by reason of herself; therefore she is not just; this does not follow, for neither of these arguments essentially includes the inference. -- And *if you should argue* that in the first instant of her nature she is truly understood not to be just; *I say* that that is false; rather, she is truly not understood to be just, because when people are abstracting there is no falsehood; for from the fact that I am not thinking that a man is an animal, it is not thereby the case that I am thinking that he is not an animal; because then an abstraction, by taking away from something what is essentially in it, could not be without falsehood.

### **Scotus On The Intervening Article. Whether innocence is a more outstanding benefit from God than repentance?**

[*Oxon.* 4 d.22; *Report. ib.*]

Objection 1. It seems that repentance is a greater benefit than innocence. For [*Oxon.* 4 d.22 n.16], in *Luke 7* it is held that Christ inquired of Simon about the two debtors, to one of whom the creditor had forgiven more and to the second less, which of them would love the creditor more; and he replied, "I suppose it was he to whom he donated more," and the Savior approved his response in these words, "You have judged rightly;" but God gives nothing to the innocent in this way, because he does not find anything in the innocent to forgive: but he pardons for the sinner many things through repentance; therefore the sinner is more bound to God than the innocent, and as a consequence receives a greater benefit from him, since through repentance what he is accused of is forgiven.

Objection 2. [*Oxon.* 4 d.22 n.14]. Someone who falls into sin after repentance is acting against the law of gratitude, against his promise not to sin in the future, and against the divine precept: but someone who falls from innocence is only acting against gratitude; therefore someone who falls after repentance sins more gravely; therefore a greater benefit was conferred on him through repentance, otherwise his sin would not be more grave.

On the contrary, [*Oxon.* ib. n.15] someone who falls from the state of innocence through sin is more gravely sinning than someone who falls from the state of repentance: but unless innocence were a more outstanding benefit than repentance he would not be more gravely sinning; therefore innocence is a greater benefit from God than repentance. *Proof of the minor:* because the innocent has a lesser occasion of falling; therefore he sins more gravely than he who, since he had sinned at another time, is relying on weaker powers of resistance.

I answer that, [*Oxon.* ib.] it must be said that it is a simply greater divine benefit for innocence to be preserved than to grant repentance after commission of sin. *Proof:* because the state of innocence (insofar, that is, as it not only includes the sanctifying grace first granted, but as it also involves its additional consequences, as the gift of perseverance and the other helps, both intrinsic and extrinsic) absolutely and simply joins one more perfectly to the end, and even more perfectly contains, as concerns freedom from sin, the effect of penitential grace, than repentance itself; therefore it is a greater benefit from God. *Proof of the assumption:* because the gift of innocence frees from sins by preventing one from falling into them: repentance, however, frees after a fall: but it is better and more desirable not to fall into sins than after a fall to be freed from them. Hence God conferred a greater benefit on his Mother by preventing her from contracting original guilt and from committing any actual sin, than he conferred on Magdalene and the other Saints who at some time committed sins and were freed through repentance. She is therefore, from never having fallen into sin, an altogether singular glory and embellishment among the Blessed .

Reply to Objection 1. I reply [*Oxon.* ib. n.16] that ‘to be donated’ (*donari*) can be taken in two ways: first, indeed, as it is an act of will generously communicating itself, and not from any debt of its own, to whom it does communicate itself. Secondly, it can be taken to mean pardon or remit a contracted debt, in which way it is taken when we say, he condoned sins. According, therefore, to the first sense, greater things are donated to the innocent, because he is prevented from contracting the debt of sin; but in the second way, more is condoned to the sinner through remission, because he is freed from the debt to which he is subject. Besides, the former gift is simply more excellent than the second, because of those to whom, since they have committed little, God condones little, there is no one but that another greater benefit is donated to him than the condoning, that is the remitting, of many things, namely the preserving him from the other sins into which he could have fallen, and would have fallen, unless he had been preserved by God.

And this doctrine [*Oxon.* ib. n.17] is from Augustine (*Homil.* 23 *inter* 50) expounding the text cited from *Luke*, and teaching that he who was preserved by God from committing

greater crimes should more confess himself to be a debtor to God than he who has been freed through repentance from sins committed. His words are these: “You have not been an adulterer in that past life of yours full of ignorance? Your God says this to you: I was ruling you for me, I was keeping you for me, so that you would not commit adultery; a seducer was absent, and I made it so that a seducer was absent. There was a seducer present, the place was not lacking, the time was not lacking; I made it so that you did not consent. Recognize then the grace of him to whom you also owe what you did not commit. That man there is in debt to me for what has been done and that you have seen remitted: you too are in debt to me for what you have not committed: for there is no sin which a man does that a second man could not do if his Ruler, by whom he was made to be man, were absent.” There are those words. If therefore he for whom, by a special grace, innocence has been preserved is bound to God by a greater obligation of gratitude than he who was permitted to fall into sins and was raised by repentance, certainly innocence will be a greater benefit than repentance.

This can be confirmed by an example: [*Oxon. ib.*] suppose someone should, of his generosity, concede to another all his property to use at will, but should concede certain things to someone else as a loan, but when the time of restitution comes he should remit it; which of the two who were affected by his beneficence should love him more? Certainly the first who received a greater benefit; and nevertheless he might remit more to the second; but the fact that he has nothing to forgive the first is from the beneficence of him who conceded to him generously all his goods, and that is why he received a greater benefit and is held bound to him by a greater bond of gratitude. That proposition therefore, *he to whom more is forgiven loves the forgiver more*, is not true unless it be referred to one who condones debts and through whose beneficence it is not the case that he who owes less does not in fact owe as much as the greater debtor does. because, that is, a benefit is conferred on him through the grace of the creditor by which he is prevented from incurring as many debts as the other does.

Reply to Objection 2. I reply thus: [*Oxon. ib. n.15*] some sin can have now one aggravating circumstance and now another, and it can even happen that a circumstance that aggravates a sin elicited by that circumstance should, when the circumstance has personal status, be more grave than some other aggravating circumstance. *To the point*: because a penitent has promised that he will not sin again, he will, if he does sin again, sin by that fact more gravely. But this circumstance does not aggravate in exactly the same way as the circumstance of the state of innocence does, where less occasion for offending occurs and the innocent, because more things have been given to him, is more bound to God; for the fact that he has not offended was from the gift of God, which gift has not been given to the one repenting.

### Article 3. Whether the Blessed Virgin was cleansed from the infection of the fomes?

*Aquinas*

Objection 1: It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was not cleansed from the infection of the fomes. For just as the fomes, consisting in the rebellion of the lower powers against the reason, is a punishment of original sin; so also are death and other corporeal penalties. Therefore the fomes was not entirely removed from her.

Objection 2: Further, it is written (*2 Cor.* 12:9): “Power is made perfect in infirmity,” which refers to the weakness of the fomes, by reason of which he (the Apostle) felt the “sting of the flesh.” But it was not fitting that anything should be taken away from the Blessed Virgin, pertaining to the perfection of virtue. Therefore it was unfitting that the fomes should be entirely taken away from her.

Objection 3: Further, Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.* iii) that “the Holy Ghost came upon” the Blessed Virgin, “purifying her,” before she conceived the Son of God. But this can only be understood of purification from the fomes: for she committed no sin, as Augustine says (*De Nat. et Grat.* xxvi). Therefore by the sanctification in the womb she was not absolutely cleansed from the fomes.

On the contrary, It is written (*Canticles* 4:7): “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee!” But the fomes implies a blemish, at any rate in the flesh. Therefore the fomes was not in the Blessed Virgin.

I answer that, on this point there are various opinions. For some have held that the fomes was entirely taken away in that sanctification whereby the Blessed Virgin

*Scotus* [*Oxon.* 2 d.29; d.32]

Objection 1. It seems that the kindling or tinder for sin (*fomes*) was not totally taken away, through sanctification, from the Blessed Virgin. For although, from what was said above (in article 1 of this question), the Blessed Virgin might have had original guilt, nevertheless many of the penalties she was subject to were so that they might be material to her for merit: but the kindling of sin would also have been occasion to her of meriting; therefore she had it.

Objection 2. The first man, having been founded in original justice, did not have the kindling, but there was in him before sin perfect tranquility; therefore original justice alone and not grace takes away the kindling. Now the just, who have grace, experience the opposition of their inferior to their superior part, and hence they have the kindling: but even if the Blessed Virgin had, through prevenient grace, not contracted original guilt, original justice would not thereby have been restored to her; therefore the kindling would not have been taken away from her.

Objection 3. (*Cf. IIIa* q.15 a.2). Christ did not have the kindling for sin nor original sin, because he was full of grace and truth, nor was he a natural son of Adam: but [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.15] the Blessed Virgin did not have this sort of fullness of the graces, since she was not united hypostatically to God, and she was the natural daughter of Adam; therefore the kindling was not totally taken away from her.

On the contrary, [*Oxon. ib.* n.4] it was necessary for the most perfect Mediator to

was sanctified in the womb. Others say that it remained as far as it causes a difficulty in doing good, but was taken away as far as it causes a proneness to evil. Others again, that it was taken away as to the personal corruption, by which it makes us quick to do evil and slow to do good: but that it remained as to the corruption of nature, inasmuch as it is the cause of transmitting original sin to the offspring. Lastly, others say that, in her first sanctification, the fomes remained essentially, but was fettered; and that, when she conceived the Son of God, it was entirely taken away. In order to understand the question at issue, it must be observed that the fomes is nothing but a certain inordinate, but habitual, concupiscence of the sensitive appetite. for actual concupiscence is a sinful motion. Now sensual concupiscence is said to be inordinate, in so far as it rebels against reason; and this it does by inclining to evil, or hindering from good. Consequently it is essential to the fomes to incline to evil, or hinder from good. Wherefore to say that the fomes was in the Blessed Virgin without an inclination to evil, is to combine two contradictory statements.

In like manner it seems to imply a contradiction to say that the fomes remained as to the corruption of nature, but not as to the personal corruption. For, according to Augustine (*De Nup. et Concup.* i.), it is lust that transmits original sin to the offspring. Now lust implies inordinate concupiscence, not entirely subject to reason: and therefore, if the fomes were entirely taken away as to personal corruption, it could not remain as to the corruption of nature.

It remains, therefore, for us to say, either that the fomes was entirely taken away from her by her first sanctification or that it was fettered. Now that the fomes was

have the most perfect act of mediating: but from this it was necessary that he free his Mother from every actual sin, and preserve her from original sin; therefore it was also necessary for him to constitute her to be such that she was immune from all kindling of sin, and from all inclination to sin.

I answer that, it must be said that through sanctification the kindling was altogether taken away from the Blessed Virgin; for by 'kindling' [*Oxon.* 2 d.29 n.4] we understand a proneness in the sensitive appetite whereby it is borne immediately to its proper objects and desires to delight in them, and if it be pulled back therefrom by the rational appetite, it is not pulled back willingly and pleasingly, but unwillingly and with sadness; and from this, of course, arises a battle between the flesh and the spirit, and the greatest discord. In the state of innocence, however, there was peace and tranquility; but in the Blessed Virgin there was brought about through sanctification the same peace and tranquility; so much so that neither was her sensitive appetite borne to its proper objects beyond what was prescribed by her rational appetite, nor was this for her any cause of sadness; therefore all kindling of sin was taken away from her. *Declaration of the minor:* for just as, from the excellence of her Son, whereby he was the most perfect Mediator and Redeemer, it was fitting for her to have had the most special privilege of preservative redemption, so much so that she was not at all, as others are, redeemed after fall into original sin, but before she could be guilty of it; so, in the same manner, it was fitting for her to be so far removed from all sin that not even any the least inclination for it remained in her; for this equally has regard to the most noble act of the most perfect Mediator and Redeemer. -- Again, [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1] in the other sons of Adam, who in

entirely taken away, might be understood in this way, that, by the abundance of grace bestowed on the Blessed Virgin, such a disposition of the soul's powers was granted to her, that the lower powers were never moved without the command of her reason: just as we have stated to have been the case with Christ (Question [15], Article [2]), who certainly did not have the fomes of sin; as also was the case with Adam, before he sinned, by reason of original justice: so that, in this respect, the grace of sanctification in the Virgin had the force of original justice. And although this appears to be part of the dignity of the Virgin Mother, yet it is somewhat derogatory to the dignity of Christ, without whose power no one had been freed from the first sentence of condemnation. And though, through faith in Christ, some were freed from that condemnation, according to the spirit, before Christ's Incarnation, yet it does not seem fitting that any one should be freed from that condemnation, according to the flesh, except after His Incarnation, for it was then that immunity from condemnation was first to appear. Consequently, just as before the immortality of the flesh of Christ rising again, none obtained immortality of the flesh, so it seems unfitting to say that before Christ appeared in sinless flesh, His Virgin Mother's or anyone else's flesh should be without the fomes, which is called "the law of the flesh" or "of the members" (*Rm. 7:23,25*).

Therefore it seems better to say that by the sanctification in the womb, the Virgin was not freed from the fomes in its essence, but that it remained fettered: not indeed by an act of her reason, as in holy men, since she had not the use of reason from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, for this was the singular privilege of Christ: but by reason of the abundant grace

him sinned, although original sin is destroyed in Baptism or in Circumcision, after the original stain, through the merits of the Mediator, whether as foreseen or as displayed, there nevertheless remains in them all the kindling of sin and the proneness to sin; because, of course, although he was their Repairer and Redeemer, he did not, however, with respect to them, have the most noble act which it was necessary for him to have. Since, therefore, he had this act with respect to his Mother, as he took away from her actual and original sin, so also he took away the kindling and every proneness to sin.

Reply to Objection 1. I concede [*Oxon. ib. n.8*] that the kindling of sin could have been for her an occasion for meriting, just as was death too and all the other penalties which she bore; but I deny that for that reason the kindling was present in her, because just as she could have contracted original sin and did not contract it, so her perpetual innocence and sanctification kept all kindling away from her. For, just as her soul was always most pleasing to God and subject to him, so was it brought about that the inferior powers of her sensitive appetite should be subdued under reason and rational appetite.

Reply to Objection 2. I concede that in holy men the kindling stands along with grace at the same time; for the kindling [*Oxon. 2 d 32 n.4*] is not as such sin; because the kindling is not anything other than a natural proneness of the sensitive appetite towards its proper objects, which objects are not to be pursued in this way but as reason dictates. And I concede also that the lack of original justice is not taken away except by that original justice, because the privation does not depart from a subject except through the opposite habit.



bestowed on her in her sanctification, and still more perfectly by Divine Providence preserving her sensitive soul, in a singular manner, from any inordinate movement. Afterwards, however, at the conception of Christ's flesh, in which for the first time immunity from sin was to be conspicuous, it is to be believed that entire freedom from the fomes redounded from the Child to the Mother. This indeed is signified (*Ezech.* 43:2): "Behold the glory of the God of Israel came in by the way of the east," i.e. by the Blessed Virgin, "and the earth," i.e. her flesh, "shone with His," i.e. Christ's, "majesty."

Reply to Objection 1: Death and such like penalties do not of themselves incline us to sin. Wherefore though Christ assumed them, He did not assume the fomes. Consequently in order that the Blessed Virgin might be conformed to her Son, from "whose fullness" her grace was derived, the fomes was at first fettered and afterwards taken away: while she was not freed from death and other such penalties.

Reply to Objection 2: The "infirmity" of the flesh, that pertains to the fomes, is indeed to holy men an occasional cause of perfect virtue: but not the "sine qua non" of perfection: and it is quite enough to ascribe to the Blessed Virgin perfect virtue and abundant grace: nor is there any need to attribute to her every occasional cause of perfection.

Reply to Objection 3: The Holy Ghost effected a twofold purification in the Blessed Virgin. The first was, as it were, preparatory to Christ's conception: which did not cleanse her from the stain of sin or fomes, but rather gave her mind a unity of purpose and disengaged it from a multiplicity of things (Cf. Dionysius, *Div. Nom.* iv), since even the angels are said to

But nevertheless, when grace is present, that lack is not original guilt because it is not owed as a debt; therefore justice is restored in its equivalent as far as the Divine acceptance is concerned. -- And *when it is said*: only original justice and not grace takes away the kindling; *I answer* that, if the grace expels original sin, I concede the point: but if the grace prevents it from being present, I deny it; because since now the grace prevents there ever being any disorder of the soul towards God, neither will there ever be any disorder of the inferior powers towards the superior ones; and for that reason there is great peace and tranquility especially if it be given without being able to be lost, as its being in fact so given to the Blessed Virgin is evident from this, that she was not at any time going to commit sin, not even venially; therefore all disorder and proneness to sin was taken away. -- *I answer also in another way* to the assertion that only original justice and not grace takes away the kindling; for [*Oxon. ib.* d.37 q.2 n.9ff.] although grace does not so perfectly unite to the ultimate end, as regards some accidental condition, as the original justice does, nevertheless it unites simply and more eminently to the end under the idea of end, and indeed as regards that respect in which original sin turns away from the ultimate end. Since, therefore, through this sin we are turned away from the ultimate end in respect of the disorder in our superior part towards the divine will (which will was previously desiring original justice), and since upon this disorder follows the disorder in our inferior part towards our superior; then, if it is not repugnant to grace to take away original sin so that the lack of the justice previously given should not be owing as a debt, neither is it repugnant to grace to prevent or to take away the disorder of the inferior

be purified, in whom there is no stain, as Dionysius says (*Eccl. Hier. vi*). The second purification effected in her by the Holy Ghost was by means of the conception of Christ which was the operation of the Holy Ghost. And in respect of this, it may be said that He purified her entirely from the fomes.

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part towards the superior; and, although grace does not perform this in the other Saints, with Mary it is as has been said, either because this is a privilege special to her or because it prevents that very original sin.

Reply to Objection 3. I say that although the Blessed Virgin did not have that fullness of grace which was proper to

Christ, as to the head and fount from which every grace flows into the members; nevertheless it must be confessed that she had as much fullness as was fitting to the Mother of the Only Begotten from the Father, which fullness, as it acted so that she should never sin nor contract the original stain, so it also provided that she should lack also the kindling of sin.

#### **Article 4. Whether by being sanctified in the womb the Blessed Virgin was preserved from all actual sin?**

*Aquinas*

Objection 1: It would seem that by being sanctified in the womb the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all actual sin. For, as we have already stated (Article [3]), after her first sanctification the fomes remained in the Virgin. Now the motion of the fomes, even if it precede the act of the reason, is a venial sin, albeit extremely slight, as Augustine says in his work *De Trinitate* [\*Cf. *Sent. ii, D, 24*]. Therefore there was some venial sin in the Blessed Virgin.

Objection 2: Further, Augustine (*Qq. Nov. et Vet. Test. lxxiii on Lk. 2:35*: “Thy own soul a sword shall pierce”) says that the Blessed Virgin “was troubled with wondering doubt at the death of our Lord.” But doubt in matters of faith is a sin. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all actual sin.

Objection 3: Further, Chrysostom (*Hom.*

*Scotus* [*Oxon. 3. d.3 q.1; Report. ib.*])

Objection 1. The Blessed Virgin did not, through sanctification of this sort, attain to never sinning. For of whatever sort the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin was, she was not placed by it beyond the state of life; for she was, before she departed from this life, a wayfarer: but [*Oxon. 2 d.20 3 n.4*] the will of a creature on the way is able to sin and to be turned, through an inordinate conversion to creatures, away from the end; therefore the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin did not make her incapable of sin.

Objection 2. Christ was incapable of sin, not because he had a fullness of grace, but rather in so far as his human nature was hypostatically united to the Word of God and he enjoyed the Divine Essence: but the Blessed Virgin was a pure creature and did not behold the Divine Essence, nor was she enjoying the beatific object; therefore her sanctification did not make her incapable of

xlv in *Matth.*) expounding the text: “Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee,” says: “It is clear that they did this from mere vain glory.” Again, on *Jn. 2:3*: “They have no wine,” the same Chrysostom says that “she wished to do them a favor, and raise herself in their esteem, by means of her Son: and perchance she succumbed to human frailty, just as did His brethren when they said: ‘Manifest Thyself to the world.’” And a little further on he says: “For as yet she did not believe in Him as she ought.” Now it is quite clear that all this was sinful. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all sin.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*De Nat. et Grat. xxxvi*): “In the matter of sin, it is my wish to exclude absolutely all questions concerning the holy Virgin Mary, on account of the honor due to Christ. For since she conceived and brought forth Him who most certainly was guilty of no sin, we know that an abundance of grace was given her that she might be in every way the conqueror of sin.”

I answer that, God so prepares and endows those, whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it, according to *2 Cor. 3:6*: “(Who) hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament.” Now the Blessed Virgin was chosen by God to be His Mother. Therefore there can be no doubt that God, by His grace, made her worthy of that office, according to the words spoken to her by the angel (*Lk. 1:30,31*): “Thou hast found grace with God: behold thou shalt conceive,” etc. But she would not have been worthy to be the Mother of God, if she had ever sinned. First, because the honor of the parents reflects on the child, according to *Prov. 17:6*: “The glory of children are their fathers”: and

sin.

Objection 3. [*Oxon. 4 d.49 q.6 n.11*] The Blessed are not incapable of sin, except in the compound sense, that is, not because they lack the power to sin, but because, with God so anticipating their will that he always continues their act of enjoying him, it happens that their power to sin is never brought to act; therefore if the incapacity to sin of the Blessed is not from sanctifying grace, much less could any wayfarer whatever, through any sanctification whatever, be incapable of sin.

On the contrary, [*Oxon. 3 d.18 n. 13*] Christ merited that his most Blessed Mother should not contract original sin, grace having been conferred on her at that very moment when sin would have been infused: but from thence it came about that she never actually sinned; for the fact that men may fall into sins is from original sin and its disorderedness; therefore, through sanctification of that sort, which was certainly the most singular, the Blessed Virgin obtained never to sin.

I answer that, it must be said that the Blessed Virgin had it from sanctifying grace at the instant of her conception that she should never sin. Which fact indeed [*Report. 3 d.3 q.1 n.1*] Augustine expressed most clearly (*De Natura et Gratia, ch.36*) in saying: “When there is discussion of sins I wish to have about the Holy Virgin Mary, because of the honor of the Lord, altogether no question. For from this we know that more of grace was conferred on her for overcoming sin in every part, because she merited to conceive and bear him who it is established had no sin.” Therefore that the Blessed Virgin overcame sin in every part is to be attributed to her sanctification, which was so great that it admitted altogether no sin. -- *Next, [Oxon. 2 d.23*

consequently, on the other hand, the Mother's shame would have reflected on her Son. Secondly, because of the singular affinity between her and Christ, who took flesh from her: and it is written (*2 Cor.* 6:15): "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Thirdly, because of the singular manner in which the Son of God, who is the "Divine Wisdom" (*1 Cor.* 1:24) dwelt in her, not only in her soul but in her womb. And it is written (*Wis.* 1:4): "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."

We must therefore confess simply that the Blessed Virgin committed no actual sin, neither mortal nor venial; so that what is written (*Cant* 4:7) is fulfilled: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee," etc.

Reply to Objection 1: After her sanctification the fomes remained in the Blessed Virgin, but fettered; lest she should be surprised by some sudden inordinate act, antecedent to the act of reason. And although the grace of her sanctification contributed to this effect, yet it did not suffice; for otherwise the result of her sanctification would have been to render impossible in her any sensual movement not preceded by an act of reason, and thus she would not have had the fomes, which is contrary to what we have said above (Article [3]). We must therefore say that the above mentioned fettering (of the fomes) was perfected by divine providence not permitting any inordinate motion to result from the fomes.

Reply to Objection 2: Origen (*Hom.* xvii in *Luc.*) and certain other doctors expound these words of Simeon as referring to the sorrow which she suffered at the time of our Lord's Passion. Ambrose (in *Luc.* 2:35) says that the sword signifies "Mary's

n.7] that human nature, being of itself defectible, should not sin is from grace. On this supposition I argue as follows: Christ would not be the most perfect meritorious cause and the most perfect Mediator if he had not merited that there be given to some person, namely to his Mother, as much grace as was possible and fitting to exist in a pure creature: but he was in very truth such a meritorious cause; for [*Oxon.* 3 d.13 q.4 n.9] we ought to attribute every excellence to Christ the Lord; therefore he merited that God should give as much grace as befitted a pure creature, and from thence that that much grace was, as a matter of fact, given to his Mother, who was before all creatures most united to himself, since he assumed flesh from her flesh: but if she had at any time sinned, then in no wise had that fullness of grace been given to her that could, without incongruity, exist in a pure creature, because we could conceive some other greater grace, which would bring it about that the person sanctified by it should admit, and commit, no sin; the grace, therefore, that was conferred on the Blessed Virgin was of such a kind, and so great, that it prevented original sin and excluded altogether every actual sin. -- Finally, [*Oxon.* 3 d.19 n.6] Christ, through his passion, reconciled the human race, guilty of the sin of its first parent, to the Trinity accepting that passion; but he most perfectly reconciled no others except his Mother, nor was he their most perfect Repairer, because he permitted them all to be born as children of wrath, and did not prevent the actual sins of many of them; therefore [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 nn.4 to 7] he ought to have had the act of the most perfect Reconciler towards his Mother; from her, accordingly, he ought to have warded off all penalties impeding the most perfect reconciliation: but if he had permitted her at any time to fall into some

prudence which took note of the heavenly mystery. For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword” (*Heb.* 4:12).

Others again take the sword to signify doubt. But this is to be understood of the doubt, not of unbelief, but of wonder and discussion. Thus Basil says (*Ep. ad Optim.*) that “the Blessed Virgin while standing by the cross, and observing every detail, after the message of Gabriel, and the ineffable knowledge of the Divine Conception, after that wondrous manifestation of miracles, was troubled in mind”: that is to say, on the one side seeing Him suffer such humiliation, and on the other considering His marvelous works.

Reply to Objection 3: In those words Chrysostom goes too far. They may, however, be explained as meaning that our Lord corrected in her, not the inordinate motion of vain glory in regard to herself, but that which might be in the thoughts of others.

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incapable of sin, therefore, as blessed, and equally because full of grace and truth, and perhaps also he obtained that dignity from other titles. But the Blessed Virgin his Mother never sinned because of having grace and sanctification and rectitude so great that by no reason could any obliquity break into, nor deceit of the enemy penetrate, that most sincere mind of hers.

Reply to Objection 3. I say [*Oxon.* 4 d.49 q.6 n.11ff.] that if the Blessed are incapable of sin for this reason, that God does not permit them to interrupt their act of enjoying him, then by parity he will not permit those whom he renders incapable of sin as wayfarers to elicit any unright act, but will make them always to act in line with the inclination of charity, by which he pursues them with a singular love. And that is why all incapacity to sin is habitually and in first act from sanctifying grace, and therefore rightly and truly is the Blessed Virgin said to have obtained her incapacity to sin from her most excellent sanctification (and of what sort, moreover, her sanctification was will be declared in the following article).

sin, however minimal, he would not have freed her from all penalties and evils; therefore he would not have most perfectly reconciled her to the Trinity; for sin is a greater penalty for an intellectual nature than any other penalty, although it be not a sin, whatsoever; and consequently the blessed Virgin, as Mother of Christ, ought to have obtained it from her sanctification that she should never fall into any sin.

Reply to Objection 1. I concede that the Blessed Virgin existed as a wayfarer before her death, as other men do, and I concede also that she had a will that was of its own nature defectible and capable of sinning; but she was incapable of sin, [*Oxon.* 2 d.23 n.7] and in fact she never did sin, from the gift of God sanctifying the Mother of the Only Begotten of the Father with such a sanctification that any sin was impossible with it.

Reply to Objection 2. I reply that there is no repugnance in Christ having been from several causes incapable of sin, where any one of these causes would of itself have abundantly rendered him such. He was

**Article 5. Whether, by her sanctification in the womb, the Blessed Virgin received the fullness of grace?**

*Aquinas*

Objection 1: It would seem that, by her sanctification in the womb, the Blessed Virgin did not receive the fullness or perfection of grace. For this seems to be Christ's privilege, according to *Jn.* 1:14: "We saw Him [Vulg.: 'His glory'] as the Only-Begotten [Vulg.: 'as it were of the Only-Begotten'] full of grace and truth." But what is proper to Christ ought not to be ascribed to some one else. Therefore the Blessed Virgin did not receive the fullness of grace at the time of her sanctification.

Objection 2: Further, nothing remains to be added to that which is full and perfect: for "the perfect is that which lacks nothing," as is said *Phys.* iii. But the Blessed Virgin received additional grace afterwards when she conceived Christ; for to her was it said (*Lk.* 1:35): "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee: and again, when she was assumed into glory." Therefore it seems that she did not receive the fullness of grace at the time of her first sanctification.

Objection 3: Further, "God does nothing useless," as is said *De Coelo et Mundo* i. But it would have been useless for her to have certain graces, for she would never have put them to use: since we do not read that she taught, which is the act of wisdom; or that she worked miracles, which is the act of one of the gratuitous graces. Therefore she had not the fullness of grace.

On the contrary, The angel said to her: "Hail, full of grace" (*Lk.* 1:28); which words Jerome expounds as follows, in a sermon on the Assumption (cf. *Ep. ad Paul. et Eustoch.*): "Full indeed of grace: for to others it is given in portions; whereas

*Scotus* [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1; *Report. ib.*]

Objection 1. It seems that the Blessed Virgin through her sanctification in the womb did not in any way acquire fullness of the graces. For [*Oxon.* 3 d.13 q.2 n.2] to have fullness of the graces is proper to the humanity of Christ, because of the fact that it was united hypostatically to the Divine Word; hence it is written in *John* 1: "We saw his glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth:" but things that pertain properly to Christ cannot belong to a pure creature; therefore the Blessed Virgin did not, through her sanctification in the womb, acquire fullness of the graces.

Objection 2. If to the Blessed Virgin were to be attributed fullness of the graces, it would be most of all because she had a measure of sanctification which the other Saints did not have, namely because she was preserved through sanctifying grace from being guilty of original sin; now the other Saints were freed through grace from the guilt which they had contracted: but it does not thereby follow that the Blessed Virgin was indued with fullness of the graces, or that she acquired a greater grace than was in all the other Saints together. *Proof:* [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.9) because, after the removal of original guilt, a grace could have been bestowed on any one of them by God in Baptism, or in Circumcision, which was equal to the grace with which the Blessed Virgin was flooded, or the grace could have reached that level through their merits.

Objection 3. Although to the Blessed Virgin is to be attributed more ample grace than to all the other Saints descended from

on Mary the fullness of grace was showered all at once.”

I answer that, In every genus, the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part which it has in the effect of that principle, whence Dionysius says (*Coel. Hier.* iv) that angels, being nearer to God, have a greater share than men, in the effects of the Divine goodness. Now Christ is the principle of grace, authoritatively as to His Godhead, instrumentally as to His humanity: whence (*Jn.* 1:17) it is written: “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity: because He received His human nature from her. Therefore it was due to her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others.

Reply to Objection 1: God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him. And since Christ as man was predestinated and chosen to be “predestinated the Son of God in power . . . of sanctification” (*Rm.* 1:4), it was proper to Him to have such a fullness of grace that it overflowed from Him into all, according to *Jn.* 1:16: “Of His fullness we have all received.” Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fullness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him Who is full of all grace; and by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, dispensed grace to all.

Reply to Objection 2: In natural things at first there is perfection of disposition, for instance when matter is perfectly disposed for the form. Secondly, there is the perfection of the form; and this is the more excellent, for the heat that proceeds from the form of fire is more perfect than that which disposed to the form of fire. Thirdly, there is the perfection of the end: for

Adam, because they sinned in him while the Blessed Virgin was without share of original guilt; nevertheless greater grace could not be attributed to the Blessed Virgin than was in all the Angels, who were never under any sin, and who are of a more eminent nature and more capable of the fullness of grace; but for no other reason would she be endowed with fullness of the graces except because a greater grace would be poured into her than all the other holy ones together had; therefore the Blessed Virgin did not get fullness of the graces in her sanctification.

Objection 4. If the Blessed Virgin Mary had attained fullness of the graces and gifts, she would certainly have used them for the benefit of the Church: but it is not established that she exercised those sort of gifts, nor the graces freely given, for the benefit of others, and yet the Church at her time was very greatly in need of ministers, possessed of the gift of wisdom, who might educate others and teach the doctrine of Christ; therefore the Blessed Virgin seems not to have obtained fullness of the graces and gifts.

On the contrary, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.6 n.9] in *Luke* 1 the Angel Gabriel says to Mary: “Hail full of grace;” therefore either it was as soon as she was sanctified that she obtained fullness of the graces, or it was then, in the conceiving of her Son, that she acquired it .

I answer that, it must be said that the Blessed Virgin, through sanctification of the sort she had, acquired fullness of the graces. If indeed [*Oxon.* 4 d.25 q.2 n.3; 2 d.19 n.5] her sanctification was of such a sort and so great that no pure creature can be equaled to her in sanctity; then, in a more excellent way, which no sanctity of another creature reached, she was

instance when fire has its qualities in the most perfect degree, having mounted to its own place.

In like manner there was a threefold perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin. The first was a kind of disposition, by which she was made worthy to be the mother of Christ: and this was the perfection of her sanctification. The second perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin was through the presence of the Son of God Incarnate in her womb. The third perfection of the end is that which she has in glory.

That the second perfection excels the first, and the third the second, appears (1) from the point of view of deliverance from evil. For at first in her sanctification she was delivered from original sin: afterwards, in the conception of the Son of God, she was entirely cleansed from the fomes: lastly, in her glorification she was also delivered from all affliction whatever. It appears (2) from the point of view of ordering to good. For at first in her sanctification she received grace inclining her to good: in the conception of the Son of God she received consummate grace confirming her in good; and in her glorification her grace was further consummated so as to perfect her in the enjoyment of all good.

Reply to Objection 3: There is no doubt that the Blessed Virgin received in a high degree both the gift of wisdom and the grace of miracles and even of prophecy, just as Christ had them. But she did not so receive them, as to put them and such like graces to every use, as did Christ: but accordingly as it befitted her condition of life. For she had the use of wisdom in contemplation, according to *Lk. 2:19*: “But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.” But she had not the use of

sanctified; therefore [*Oxon. 4 d.4 q.6 n.3*] her sanctification had a higher and more excellent mode, which it did not fit any other creature to have reached. But that higher mode carried before it fullness of the graces. For she acquired sanctity and fullness of the graces in the way and at the kind of level that the grace was that Christ her Son merited for her: but Christ [*Oxon. 3 d.3 q.1 n.4*] had towards his Mother the most excellent act of mediating and of meriting grace; for he not only merited that a guilt of hers, which did nowhere exist in her, should be destroyed, but in addition that it should not exist in her, which, that he should merit it also for the other Saints, was not conceded. A greater and a more ample grace therefore did he obtain for his Mother than for all the other Saints. For just as all the other Saints, apart from his Mother, were at some time under sin, so, for it to be that the Blessed Virgin was never under guilt, she was deemed worthy of a greater love from God, and hence was endowed with a greater sanctity, than all the Saints together; for they together had all been deprived at some time of grace, whether through their own or through an alien guilt; therefore together all were not always pleasing to God, nor always holy, and thence the single sanctity of the Blessed Virgin is far more excellent than the sanctity of all the rest. Therefore she had fullness of the graces, which could not be found in any other creature, since there was no other creature as loved and as dear to God.

Reply to Objection 1. I say that to have fullness of grace is proper to Christ insofar as everyone receives from him, as from the head flowing into all the members of the body, the grace by which they are sanctified. And in this way the Blessed Virgin could not have had fullness of the graces because the grace which God



wisdom as to teaching: since this befitted not the female sex, according to *1 Tim.* 2:12: “But I suffer not a woman to teach.” The use of miracles did not become her while she lived: because at that time the Teaching of Christ was to be confirmed by miracles, and therefore it was befitting that Christ alone, and His disciples who were the bearers of His doctrine, should work miracles. Hence of John the Baptist it is written (*Jn.* 10:41) that he “did no sign”; that is, in order that all might fix their attention on Christ. As to the use of prophecy, it is clear that she had it, from the canticle spoken by her: “My soul doth magnify the Lord” (*Lk.* 1:46, etc.).

conferred on her descended from the fullness of her Son; but she was full of grace, and of all supernatural gifts, because when she conceived Christ she stood out before all other creatures as the nearest to God, and she was the nearer to God the more excellent and higher the act of mediating and of meriting grace that one must believe her Son had towards her; and thence one must believe that she acquired a greater grace than was given to the rest of the Saints together.

Reply to Objection 2. If [*Oxon.* 3 d.32 n.5] all the other Saints, apart from the Blessed Virgin, fell in Adam, and she alone was preserved, it is manifest that God more loved her by herself than he loved all the

others together; and so it is manifest that he conferred on her a greater grace than he conferred on all the Saints together; for God was at some time angered with all the other Saints together, and with the Blessed Virgin alone was he never angered; therefore she was more loved than all of them. There is also [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1 n.5] an example for this in agreement with the example of Anselm (*Cur Deus Homo*, 2 ch.16). For if anyone, because of an injury done to a king, should deserve to have the king’s anger referred back both to himself and to all his natural sons, and to such an extent that the king should declare all of them to have fallen away from the inheritance to which, by right of blood, they were called; if one mediator should obtain that the others, after the offense to the king had been contracted, should again be reconciled to him and be restored to their ancient right, with one of them excepted for whom the mediator so pleases the king that that one should never incur the royal offense, nor merit his anger, it is manifest how that mediator, with respect to that one individual, exercises a greater and more excellent placation, and shows a greater and more excellent charity, than he does with respect to all the rest -- and that both intensively and extensively, just as the act of placating and mediating is more intense; for it exceeds extensively and intensively the other act of placating, both because it has as it were two effects, namely of preserving and of placating; and because the grace equals, or the gratuitous effect corresponds to, these effects; therefore he wished more and greater goods to that single individual than to all the rest; nor is the nature of that exception [*Oxon.* 3 d 32 n.5] to be looked for and sought out in the one thus preserved, but in the sole divine will accepting the petitions of the mediator. And although it be not impossible for God to have given or to give equal grace to others; nevertheless it was appropriate for this grace to have been given only to the Mother of Christ, and not to be given to any other creature.

Reply to Objection 3. I say (*Cf.* q.7 and 8) that the Angels are also more noble than the humanity of Christ, and yet not they but Christ stood forth full of grace and truth; for he is of men and of angels the head, from whom they all receive however much they have of

grace and truth; therefore although it be that the holy angels were never under sin, nevertheless because the Mother of Christ is nearer to God than all other creatures, it was appropriate for her to have received fullness of the graces, but not any of the angels. But although [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.6 n.12] that fullness of the graces might have been given to the Blessed Virgin at the instant of her conception, which, to be sure, was fitting for the future Mother of God, nevertheless the complete fullness of the graces, to which God had disposed that she would attain, she seems to have received in that very conception of her Son, in line with that verse of *Luke* 1: “the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”

Reply to Objection 4. I reply that from the fact that the Blessed Virgin did not use the gifts and graces with which she was full for the benefit of others, one cannot and one should not infer that she lacked them; for just as she acquired the motherhood of God through her humility, so she wished to be of all the humble the exemplar, and of the feminine sex the leader. For [*Oxon.* 4 d.25 q.2 n.3] because she knew that, from the institution of Christ, women ought not publicly to teach in the Church, she wished to observe this exactly, leaving that function to the disciples of her Son, albeit she was of all creatures the wisest, and to whom no other should be equated in sanctity. Besides, that she had the gift of prophecy is established from her canticle the *Magnificat*, which in prophetic spirit she proclaimed, *Luke* 1.

#### **Article 6. Whether after Christ, it was proper to the Blessed Virgin to be sanctified in the womb?**

*Aquinas*

Objection 1: It would seem that it was proper for the Blessed Virgin, after Christ, to be sanctified in the womb. For it has been said (Article [4]) that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb, in order that she might be worthy to be the mother of God. But this is proper to her. Therefore she alone was sanctified in the womb.

Objection 2: Further, some men seem to have been more closely connected with Christ than Jeremias and John the Baptist, who are said to have been sanctified in the womb. For Christ is specially called the Son of David and of Abraham, by reason of the promise specially made to them concerning Christ. Isaias also prophesied of Christ in the most express terms. And the

*Scotus* [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1; *Report. ib.*]

I answer that, [*Oxon.* 4 d.4 q.3 n.2] it must be said that being sanctified in the womb is proper in such a way to the Blessed Virgin that it was conceded to none of the Saints, and that it was not appropriate to be conceded to them, because she alone was the future Mother of God. For although it be that John the Baptist and Jeremiah had been sanctified in the womb, and indeed before they were born; nevertheless, neither of them was immune from the original stain, but as they were conceived children of Adam, so they sinned in him. They were cleansed, therefore, and reconciled to God, after having been his enemies, through the merits of the Mediator. But [*Oxon.* 3 d.3 q.1] the Blessed Virgin was so prevented by sanctifying grace that she was

apostles were in converse with Christ Himself. And yet these are not mentioned as having been sanctified in the womb. Therefore it was not befitting that either Jeremias or John the Baptist should be sanctified in the womb.

always daughter of God, and by far the most acceptable to him, because he had chosen her to be like this, and had in fact made her to be like this, and that is why we read that it was said by the Angel uniquely to her: "Hail full of grace," *Luke 1*.

Objection 3: Further, Job says of himself

(*Job 31:18*): "From my infancy mercy grew up with me; and it came out with me from [my mother's] womb." Nevertheless we do not for this reason say that he was sanctified in the womb. Neither therefore are we bound to say that Jeremias and John the Baptist were sanctified in the womb.

On the contrary, It is written of Jeremias (*Jer. 1:5*): "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." And of John the Baptist it is written (*Lk. 1:15*): "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

I answer that, Augustine (*Ep. ad Dardan.*) seems to speak dubiously of their (Jeremias' and John the Baptist's) sanctification in the womb. For the leaping of John in the womb "might," as he says, "signify the great truth," viz. that the woman was the mother of God, "which was to be made known to his elders, though as yet unknown to the infant. Hence in the Gospel it is written, not that the infant in her womb believed, but that it 'leaped': and our eyes are witness that not only infants leap but also cattle. But this was unwonted because it was in the womb. And therefore, just as other miracles are wont to be done, this was done divinely, in the infant; not humanly by the infant. Perhaps also in this child the use of reason and will was so far accelerated that while yet in his mother's womb he was able to acknowledge, believe, and consent, whereas in other children we have to wait for these things till they grow older: this again I count as a miraculous result of the divine power."

But since it is expressly said (of John) in the Gospel that "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb"; and of Jeremias, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee"; it seems that we must needs assert that they were sanctified in the womb, although, while in the womb, they had not the use of reason (which is the point discussed by Augustine); just as neither do children enjoy the use of free will as soon as they are sanctified by baptism.

Nor are we to believe that any others, not mentioned by Scripture, were sanctified in the womb. For such privileges of grace, which are bestowed on some, outside the common law, are ordered for the salvation of others, according to *1 Cor. 12:7*: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit," which would not result from the sanctification of anyone unless it were made known to the Church.

And although it is not possible to assign a reason for God's judgments, for instance, why He bestows such a grace on one and not on another, yet there seems to be a certain fittingness in both of these being sanctified in the womb, by their foreshadowing the

sanctification which was to be effected through Christ. First, as to His Passion, according to *Heb.* 13:12: “Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate”: which Passion Jeremias foretold openly by words and by symbols, and most clearly foreshadowed by his own sufferings. Secondly, as to His Baptism (*1 Cor.* 6:11): “But you are washed, but you are sanctified”; to which Baptism John prepared men by his baptism.

Reply to Objection 1: The blessed Virgin, who was chosen by God to be His Mother, received a fuller grace of sanctification than John the Baptist and Jeremias, who were chosen to foreshadow in a special way the sanctification effected by Christ. A sign of this is that it was granted to the Blessed Virgin thence-forward never to sin either mortally or venially: whereas to the others who were thus sanctified it was granted thenceforward not to sin mortally, through the protection of God’s grace.

Reply to Objection 2: In other respects these saints might be more closely united to Christ than Jeremias and John the Baptist. But the latter were most closely united to Him by clearly foreshadowing His sanctification, as explained above.

Reply to Objection 3: The mercy of which Job speaks is not the infused virtue; but a certain natural inclination to the act of that virtue.